the THREE STOOGES™

CINEMAWARE
CORPORATION

presents

the THREE STOOGES™

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Software, manual and package design
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INTRODUCTION

"stooge, n. 1. (a) an actor stationed in the audience to assist a comedian by heckling him; (b) an actor who assists a comedian by feeding him lines, being the victim of pranks, etc."

-Webster Dictionary
(unabridged)

Film critic and historian Leonard Maltin once observed that the public is made up of two groups, "one composed of persons who laugh at the Three Stooges and the other made up of those who wonder why."

The appeal of the Stooges defies academic explanation or pedantic analysis; it simply is. Like fingers to the eyes or a fist delivered, pendulum-style, under the chin, the Stooges are a primal force; a kinetic, chaotic belly laugh that either strikes you funny or simply strikes you.

Why are the Stooges funny? As Louis Armstrong once remarked (albeit on a different subject): "If you have to ask, you'll never know." Let's put it this way: when someone slips in a puddle, are you one of the passersby laughing uncontrollably, or one of those clucking in disapproval and amazement that "anyone could find humor in another's pain!"?

The first group are Stooge fans; the latter are the folks the Stooges spent half a century throwing pies at, literally and figuratively.

I must confess that I was not a born Stooge fan. When they first appeared on New York TV in 1958, my prematurely-sophisticated eight-year-old mind refused to see the humor in these three geeks slapping, punching and poking one another. I, after all, preferred the more adult humor of Abbot & Costello.

My metamorphosis from Group B to Group A was, like most profound changes, slow and hard to pinpoint. I can only say that by the time I sat in a movie theater three years later, watching ***Stop, Look & Laugh***, the excellent compilation film hosted by Paul Winchell, I was doubled over in laughter. Perhaps I lost some sophistication in those intervening years, but I doubt it.

The success of the Stooges themselves did not come overnight, either. The original trio of Moe Howard (Harry Horowitz), his brother Shemp (Samuel Horowitz) and Larry Fine (Louis Feinberg) toiled in the fields of vaudeville for many years before producing a profitable crop of laughter.

According to Maltin's Movie Comedy Teams, Moe got his start in show business when he ran away from home in 1914 to perform on a Mississippi riverboat. This stint led him into acting and he appeared in productions as diverse as "Ten Nights in a Bar Room", and Shakespeare's "Hamlet." He was indisputably the leader of the trio, behind the scenes as well as on screen. He was the guy who kept the others in line as well as the group's businessman. Moe did all his business with a simple handshake, and as "the 4th Stooge" and veteran

of countless comedy characterizations, Emil Sitka, observed in the doumentary "The Making of the Stooges", "a handshake with Moe was better than a signed contract."

Following World War I, Moe teamed with brother Shemp in a black-face act. This is when they met up with comedian Ted Healy. Starting in 1923, the brothers went to work as Healy's "stooges" (as in Webster's second definition).

They crossed paths with Larry Fine in 1928 and the original Stooges were born. The frizzy-haired Fine was a show biz veteran at a young age. He had worked with the vaudeville musical act, "The Haney Sisters and Fine" after a long apprenticeship on the circuit. Larry was a happy-go-lucky type, a bit of a flake and not especially committed to hard work. "He lived for the racetrack," according to Sitka.

The team of Ted Healy and his Stooges did well in vaudeville and appeared in several Broadway revues, such as the legendary "Earl

TED HEALY *and his three Southern Gentlemen*

Carroll's Vanities" before moving on to Hollywood. Healy and the boys went to work at the Fox Studios and made their movie debut in the 1930 comedy ***From Soup To Nuts***.

The Stooges then returned to the stage until 1933, when they were signed by MGM. During that period, Shemp left the group to head out on his own. He became a familiar face to fans of "B-movies", usually playing minor comedy roles for Universal and was featured as manager Knobby Walsh in a series of Warner Brothers shorts based on Ham Fisher's "Joe Palooka".

Shemp was replaced by another Howard sibling, Jerry, who became better known to Stoogeophiles as "Curly", a jape at his distinctive, close-cropped "do". It is this incarnation of the Three Stooges that crystalized in the public's mind: Boss-Stooge Moe, with the washbowl bangs and fast hands; Larry, his hair like electrified mattress stuffings; and Curly, the fat simpleton with the "nyuk-nyuk" chortle and a haircut only a Marine Drill Instructor could love.

From 1933 through 1934, the trio was featured with Ted Healy in five features for MGM (including ***Dancing Lady*** with Joan Crawford and Clark Gable, and ***Hollywood Party***, which features many comedy players, including Jimmy Durante and Laurel & Hardy) and nine comedy shorts, several in Technicolor.

By 1934, the Stooges had split with Healy and signed with Columbia to make eight shorts a year. Thus began the longest-running act in show business history. Before they were done, the Stooges would compile an incredible resume of nearly 200 shorts, features and guest appearances in films! Once a year, the boys would shake hands with Columbia kingpin Harry Cohn and the contract was renewed.

The Stooges never made a fortune at Columbia — their salaries when they left studio were essentially what they were when they first signed, and they received not one dime from the TV reshowings of their shorts — but the work was steady and the Stooges were able to augment their incomes by doing live appearances, at which they were tremendously popular.

They got the ball rolling at Columbia with ***Woman Haters*** (1934), notable for its all-rhyming dialogue; and ***Punch Drunks***, with story credits going to the Stooges under their real names of Howard, Fine and Howard.

The Stooges finally caught fire with their third short of that year, ***Men in Black***, a demolition derby send-up of the popular drama *Men in White*. This short is generally regarded as the film that led to the Stooges' long association with Columbia Pictures and was even nominated for an Academy Award!

The boys worked with a compatible director in the person of Del Lord, a Mack Sennett veteran who continued with the Stooges until 1949. Lord and the Stooges collaborated on several shorts during the late 30s which are generally regarded as classics:

Hoi Polloi is a hysterical take-off on "Pygmalion". A college professor unwisely wagers with an associate that he can transform the trio into cultured gentlemen. The Stooges "debut" transforms a high society dinner into nightmarish shambles. The Stooges were at their best when set loose upon the highly polished world of High Society and "Culture".

The boys played similar havoc with high society's sporting life in ***Three Little Beers***. In this gem, they crash a special events day at a swank country club, then lay waste to its carefully manicured golf

course. (At one point Moe attempts to mollify a horrified gardener, who has just seen the holes and divots the Stooges left in their wake, by explaining: "Can't you see they're gettin' smaller?").

Courtroom dignity went out the window in ***Disorder in the Court*** with the Stooges playing a trio of witless witnesses, and the medical profession was savaged in ***Dizzy Doctors.***

The Stooges also lensed several costume pieces during this period. Among the best of these were ***Uncivil Warriors*** in which the boys were unleashed upon an unsuspecting Civil War; the western-oriented ***Whoops, I'm an Indian***!; and ***Goofs and Saddles.***

In 1938, Del Lord was joined by director Charley Chase, a former star of comedy shorts. Chase, Lord and Jules White took turns putting the boys through their paces until Chase's death in 1940. After Chase's passing, Lord and White carried on the bulk of the directing chores, along with Edward Bernds and Hugh McCollum.

"People ask me what it was like working with the Stooges," Emil Sitka has said. "The general feeling seems to be that it was like a circus, but it was really more like surgery." The Stooges' brand of physical comedy required relentless rehearsals and perfect execution lest they actually injure one another.

Despite the chaotic appearance, every element of a Stooges' film required precision and, frequently, innovation. Their sound effects, for example, were provided by Joe Henrie who director-writer Edward Bernds has called, "the unsung hero of the Stooges' films. Joe was a genius and he loved the Stooges. He would experiment endlessly" to achieve the sound that would serve as the perfect compliment to on onscreen punch, bonk or tweek. Henrie went on to become head of the audio effects department at Columbia.

In addition to their short subjects at Columbia, the Stooges appeared in several "B" features, such as ***Start Cheering*** (1938), a collegiate musical comedy featuring Jimmy Durante and cowboy actor

Charles Starrett; a guest appearance at the conclusion of ***My Sister Eileen*** (1942); ***Rockin' in the Rockies*** (1945), a country-western comedy; ***Swing Parade of 1946***, for which the Stooges were loaned to Monogram Pictures; and ***Time Out for Rhythm*** (1941) with leggy Ann Miller and Rudy Vallee. The Stooges were part of Rhythm's plot line and performed their famous "Maha" knife-throwing routine.

By this time, the Stooges were international stars, making personal appearances around the U.S. and England. Alas, Curly's health began to decline in 1946 and during the shooting of ***Half Wit's Holiday*** (1946-47), the team's 98th comedy short for Columbia, he suffered a stroke. It was his last appearance as a regular member of the Stooges.

"By the time we made ***Monkey Business Man***, Curly's next-to-last film, it was an ordeal." remembered Ed Bernds. "We had to shoot his lines one at a time."

Determined to keep the trio alive, Moe suggested to Columbia that the perfect replacement would be brother Shemp, who had already worked with them as an original Stooge. At first, according to The Three Stooges Scrapbook, the idea met with some resistance (just as, ironically, the idea of Curly replacing Shemp had!), but Moe eventually sold the notion and Shemp returned to the feeble-minded fold in the 1947 short ***Fright Night***.

Although no longer a member of the team, Curly made a final

cameo appearance in the Stooges' short ***Hold That Lion***. According to the Scrapbook, the turn was intended to boost the convalescing Curly's morale, and it was a memorable screen moment. Moe, Larry and Shemp are searching a train for the crooked lawyer who bilked them out of their inheritance, when they encounter a derby-wearing passenger producing some very distinctive and familiar sleeping sounds. The sleeper, of course, is Curly, with a regular head of hair. This sequence was used again as stock footage in the Stooges' later remake of ***Hold That Lion*** and remains a favorite of Stoogeophiles everywhere.

Director Edward Bernds joined the Stooges' directors' lineup in 1945 and guided them through the classic ***Micro Phonies*** in that year. He continued with the trio from 1945 through 1952, alternating with Jules White and Hugh McCollum to put the boys through their pie-throwing paces.

In 1951, the Stooges were loaned out for one feature, ***Gold Raiders***, directed by Edward Bernds. They were cast as travelling peddlers who help fighting lawman George O'Brien (in his last appearance as a "B" western hero) smash a gang of outlaws preying on local miners. With Bernds at the helm, the Stooges were able to really get into their roles and helped make the wild West all the wilder.

They made appearances on several TV shows during the early 50s, working with such greats as Ed Wynn, Eddie Cantor and Frank Sinatra. A pilot for a Three Stooges TV series was proposed but never sold.

By 1956, the "new" Stooges had filmed 78 comedy shorts, all the while trying out new ideas, with mixed success. Two of their shorts were even filmed in 3-D: ***Pardon My Backfire***, in which they tangled with a gang of escaped killers in their auto repair garage; and ***Spooks***, which pitted the boys against a mad scientist, his hulking assistant and a gorilla.

Death struck the trio again in 1956. Shemp passed away and was

replaced by Joe Besser (best known as the bratty "little boy" Stinky on the Abbott & Costello Show). But by this time, the market for short subjects was drying up. Columbia began cutting budgets, and their final 16 shorts suffered as result of the studio's dwindling interest. Yet the boys continued to try out new angles. ***Hoofs and Goofs*** and ***Horsing Around*** featured a reincarnation slant, with the Stooges' "sister" Bertie (played, in the conclusion of one short, by Moe in drag) "coming back" as a talking horse.

The era of the Three Stooges seemed to end with the release of ***Sappy Bullfighters*** in 1958. Moe made an appearance as a comedy cab driver in the 1957 science fiction film *Space Master X-7* (under director Edward Bernds) and a personal appearance tour was being planned when Joe Besser's wife fell ill and he was unable to leave her side.

It had been a good run. The Stooges had amassed an incredible 191 comedy shorts. They were world famous, starred in a comic strip and had even appeared in a series of 3-D comics printed during the early 50s. But, it seemed to be over.

Then the TV boom happened. In September of 1958, Columbia Pictures' TV syndication arm collected 78 of their shorts (all featuring Curly) in a package which sold to 75 TV stations.

What happened next astonished everyone —

including the Stooges, who were not even collecting residuals from their old films. The Columbia package caught fire as a whole new generation turned on to the slapstick antics of the Stooges.

Columbia, knowing a good thing, turned loose of the remaining shorts and the Stooges were back in the public eye at a level they had not experienced since the early 40s.

Moe and Larry responded to the demand for personal appearances

by hiring comedy actor Joe De Rita to fill the vacant third slot. De Rita was an ex burlesque comic who had made a few films and shorts for Columbia. But his major advantage was a resemblance to Curly, whose "woo-woo" and "nyuk-nyuk" had already become catch phrases among the boob tube generation. With his hair trimmed to resemble Curly's close-cropped look, and rechristened "Curly Joe", De Rita was an acceptable third Stooge. He never approached the popularity of his predecessor, but he did prove a journeyman foil for Moe's bossing, slapping and gouging (which the Boss Stooge decided to tone down at this point, for fear that children would ape his practiced slapstick and hurt one another).

The first of their personal appearances, arranged by a Pittsburgh nightclub owner, was a sell-out. The Stooges were off and stooging again. Special early shows were staged for the youngsters who had discovered the trio on TV. Pretty soon, Columbia decided to cash in on this Stooge-mania and signed the boys for a feature film. ***Have Rocket Will Travel*** (1959 was a science fiction spoof which was, predictably, loathed by critics and adored by audiences, who made the flick a box office success.

Next Columbia released a compilation of scenes from the Moe-

Larry-Curly Stooges' shorts, hosted by ventriloquist-comedian Paul Winchell (with dummies Jerry Mahoney and Knucklehead Smiff along to provide continuity). The film, ***Stop! Look! and Laugh!***, featured choice moments from some of the trio's best comedy shorts.

A rarely-seen featurette, The Three Stooges Scrapbook (1960), combined new footage with animated sequences. This was produced by Moe Howard's son-in-law, cartoonist-producer Norman Maurer (who drew the Stooges' comic strip during the early 50s). The demand for Stooges' product even inspired Columbia to release several of the Joe Besser shorts in a package entitled ***Three Stooges Laugh-O-Rama***. But it was the new team, with its imitation Curly, that audiences wanted to see, so the boys were soon back at work on another feature film.

Snow White and The Three Stooges (1961) was meant to be the first in a series of fairy tale-inspired features for 20th Century Fox (for whom Moe had worked on *Space Master X-7*). The film, unfortunately, was much too tame for Stooges' fans, who were unhappy with the trio's backseat role as surrogates for the Seven Dwarfs. The movie was slickly produced, with Patricia Medina and Guy Rolfe chewing up scenery as the wicked queen and her sorcerer's aide, Count Oga, but figure-skater Carol Heiss, cast in the lead as an ice-loving Snow White, never catches fire. The Stooges had little to do, and although they showed a certain aptitude for serious scenes, this was certainly not what we fans wanted to see.

As always, however, the boys were already onto something new. When they weren't raising mayhem on such TV hits as the Steve Allen and Ed Sullivan shows, they were before the cameras, unleashing their manic talents in the style audiences clearly preferred. They reunited with director Edward Bernds for a pair of latter-day Stooge highlights. ***The Three Stooges Meet Hercules*** (1962) let the trio spoof the sword & sandal epics which were so popular in the early 60s, and climaxed with a memorable chariot race/pie fight. ***The Three Stooges In Orbit***

(1962) reprised the sci-fi motif of *Have Rocket, Will Travel*, with the boys saving Earth from Martian conquest.

The Three Stooges Go Around the World in a Daze (1963) was a Jules Verne send-up directed by Norman Maurer (who owned the production company). The boys were valets to a descendant of Verne's Phineas Fogg and had an opportunity to trash any number of exotic-looking backlot sets.

The Stooges' place in comedy history was cemented in 1963, when producer Stanley Kramer cast them as firemen in his star-studded, multi-million dollar madcap comedy ***It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World.*** They made a similar cameo appearance as frontier-era artists in the western comedy ***Four For Texas*** (1963), in which they traded jokes and pokes with Dean Martin.

In their final feature, ***The Outlaws Is Coming*** (1965) — the title is a reference to the adline for Hitchcock's *The Birds* ("The Birds Is Coming!") — the Stooges once again tore up the old West before heading into the cinematic sunset.

The same year cast the Stooges as the subject of a series of five minute color cartoons for television, ***The New Three Stooges***, with live action segments to open and close the show.

During the shooting of ***Kook's Tour***, an unusual project in which the boys travelled the USA in various modes of transportation, Larry Fine was incapacitated by a stroke. An attempt was made to keep the team going with comic actor Emil Sitka, a member of the Stooges' Columbia "stock company" who appeared in ***Three Stooges In Orbit*** as a whacky scientist. Emil would have played Larry's brother, but the proposed deal fell through and the era of the Three Stooges finally ended.

"Moe said, 'The contracts are signed, everything's ready to go, you're going to be a Stooge!'," Sitka recalled. "Then I got a call; the project was delayed a week. Then another week, and another. Then,

finally, I got the call: 'The Stooges are dead.' They meant Moe had passed away."

At this writing, only Joe Besser and "Curly Joe" De Rita remain with us. Larry Fine passed away at the Motion Picture Country Home and Moe Howard is also deceased, but interest in the Stooges is anything but moribund.

In addition to constant showings of their comedy shorts and features on TV (and, recently, on movie screens), there have been several books (including Moe's own Moe Howard and The Three Stooges, written shortly before his death) and even a hit music video. The video is composed of clips from the Columbia shorts and is built around a novelty record entitled "The Curly Shuffle". The song, oddly enough, became something of an anthem for fans of the New York Mets during their world championship 1986 season, when it was played (and the video displayed on the DiamondVision scoreboard) during the seventh inning stretch of every home game.

Whether you love 'em — or wonder how anybody can even watch such stuff — the Stooges have a place in the comedy pantheon and motion picture history. They even have their own star on Hollywood Blvd. And if that isn't enough, they're now the subjects of an exciting new computer game.

The evidence of history gives the Stooges and us, their fans, the last laugh — or, in this case, the last "nyuk".

-A Dedicated Stooge Fan

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THE STORY

The scene: a quiet day in Stoogeville. Our itinerant trio is out for a stroll — they have plenty of time for such idle pursuits, being currently without gainful employment — when a disturbing sound reaches their ears.

"Hey, you two!" Moe calls out, bringing Larry and Curly to an instant stop. "Don't you knuckleheads hear that? Somebody's in trouble!"

"Yeah," agrees Larry, perking up his ears. "Somebody's cryin'!"

"It's comin' from the Orphanage!" chirps Curly.

"What kinda crumb would make an orphan cry?" wonders Moe, as the threesome gather up their indignation and march inside.

The Stooges soon trace the sounds of sobbing to its source: Ma, the sweet little old lady who runs the town orphanage.

"Gee, Moe," whispers Curly, "that's the oldest orphan I've ever seen! No wonder she's crying!"

"That's Ma, you pea brain!" responds Moe, who helps bring the point home with a slap to Curly's head. The sound of the slap is so loud, however, it interrupts Ma's crying jag and she lifts up her eyes to find the Stooges standing there.

"Why, hello, boys. So — sob — good to see you."

The Stooges move immediately to her side.

"What is it, Ma?" they all ask. "What's wrong?"

Ma rises slowly, arthritic bones creaking louder than her old rocking chair. "It's Mr. Fleecem, I'm afraid."

"Fleecem!" sputters Moe. "That flint-hearted old miser! What's he up to now?"

"It's his company, the Skin and Flint Finance Corporation. They hold the mortgage on this orphanage and unless I pay him everything I owe him within 30 days, he says he'll tear it down!"

The Stooges huddle. The Stooges are decisive!

"Don't worry, Ma!" they tell her. "We'll get the money for you!"

"You...will? Oh, how wonderful! Mary! Leona! Cynthia! Did you hear that? The boys are going to save our orphanage." Suddenly, Mary, Leona and Cynthia, Ma's beautiful daughters, appear and rush to the side of Moe, Larry and Curly

"Oh, we'd be ever so grateful," they trill. "We'd be free to marry if the orphanage were safe... and the repairs on it were made... and there was some money left over .. "

The eyes of our heroes light up like roman candles at the prospect of betrothal to these lovely lasses, and, with a hearty "Woo woo woo!", they head out to accomplish the first of their tasks: raising enough money to pay off the note on the orphanage.

They must then repair the orphanage and have enough left over to marry the three daughters!

THE ARCADE GAMES

The Stooges move through Stoogeville as if it were a three-dimensional game board. Before each turn, six icons appear above the Stooges' heads, representing the next six "squares" on the street. A hand cycles across the six icons at high speed (see Slapping Game). The player must hit the action button to stop the hand; then the Stooges advance through the streets of Stoogeville to the corresponding location.

Slapping Game

Uh oh, looks like the Stooges made a bad choice. They've wound up on an empty square as a result of Larry and Curly's constant kibitzing. Now it's up to Moe to slap some sense into them and straighten them out!

Moe stands with Curly on his right and Larry on his left and must deliver chastisement to both. The joystick controls the movements of Moe's limbs and hitting the action button initiates the slap, punch, poke or kick.

Success at this game slows down the selection hand as it cycles through the icons representing the next six squares, making it easier to choose the desired square.

Cracker Eating Contest

This arcade game asks the musical question: "Waiter, what's that oyster doing in my stew?"

Curly sits down to a bowl of oyster stew and must manipulate his spoon to get the crackers floating on top. This sequence comes from the 1941 short, ***Dutiful But Dumb***, and represents a classic bit of screen comedy, with Curly doing his best to fish the crackers from one very protective oyster!

Pie Fight/Caterer

Nobody has to tell the Stooges what to do with pies, but the catering house tries. The contract details the rate of pay and explains that the Stooges are to serve pies in exchange.

The Stooges, of course, hurled baked goods throughout their career. One of their earliest Columbia shorts was ***Hoi Polloi***, a variation on "Pygmallion" in which a professor attempts to pass off our thimble-brained threesome as habitues of High Society. Their "turning out" party, of course, degenerates into a pie throwing brawl, with many a full-length gown and tuxedo getting doused in shaving cream. Then, in ***The Three Stooges Meet Hercules***, one of their last pictures, they turned fans on with a pie fight during a chariot chase!

The Stooges didn't use real pies, of course. "Mostly they used shaving cream," explained Stooge director Edward Bernds, "and other things." The "other things" often included sawdust and rusty nails, since after numerous retakes, the "pies" were often swept up off the floor and put back in the pie tins for re-use!

Hospital Game/Doctors

Somehow, the Stooges have gotten diplomas from Medical School ("We graduated with the highest temperatures in our class!" boasts Larry) and now it's the patients' turn to suffer!

Based on a scene from their first hit Columbia short, ***Men in Black***, a rowdy parody of a contemporary doctor & nurses flick, *Men in White*, the Stooges are having a lot of trouble getting where they want to go through the crowded, sprawling hospital corridors.

When they come upon a trio of midget racecars, however, their problem is solved — and everybody elses' is just beginning!

Boxing Event

Moe enters Curly in a Boxing Match, knowing that Curly goes berserk at the sound of "Pop Goes the Weasel". But guess what? Larry just sat on the violin and busted it!

"G'wan, mattress-head!" urges Moe, punctuating his request with a few pokes and slaps. "Go get a new violin, and be quick about it!" Larry might not be able to find a violin, but he better find something that plays "Pop Goes the Weasel" so he can transform Curly from a punching bag into a fighting fool.

This game is inspired by the Columbia short, ***Punch Drunks.***

Game manual and documentation by Bill Kunkel
With an introduction by Eric Hoffman
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(Editor's note: During the development of this project, we were fortunate enough to be visited by the gracious Joan Howard Maurer (Moe's daughter), several days after her visit we received the following letter...)

Mr. Bob Jacob
Master Designer Software, Inc.
5743 Corsa Avenue, Suite 214
Westlake Village, California 91361

Dear Bob,
As I sat in your offices the other day, viewing Cinemaware's new Three Stooges computer game, I realized what a thrill this would have been for my father, Moe.

Not only were the screens filled with crisp, sharp details of computerized chaos, but the color was something to behold. During the game, I actually found myself laughing out loud as I watched Curly "nyuk-nyuking" in frustration as he tried to spoon up the crackers in the bowl of oyster stew, only to have a vicious oyster surface and snatch it away.

In the Pie Fight game, I was able to actually join in during a Three Stooges pie fight and zap my father for the first time.

All in all, it was a fascinating experience and I want to thank you and your staff of very creative people for a job well done.

Sincerely yours,

Joan Howard Maurer

Joan Howard Maurer
(Moe's daughter)